

DCMA Middle East: Ensuring Quality for the Warfighter



An Interview with Air Force Col. Kurt A. Stonerock, Commander,
DCMA Middle East

Another Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) contract management office (CMO) at the tip of the spear is DCMA Middle East. This office is primarily involved with operations and maintenance contract work, Contingency Contract Administration Support and Foreign Military Sales missions. To get an in-depth look at the type of work being done at DCMA Middle East, we spoke with that office's commander, Air Force Col. Kurt A. Stonerock.

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Communicator (C): What is DCMA Middle East's mission, and how are you organized?

Col. Stonerock (CS): Currently, we administer contracts in 13 different countries in the Middle East and Central Asia, but I think DCMA Middle East's mission can most easily be visualized in three complementary parts — each part is equally important to the United States' national security goals and its prosecution of the global war on terrorism.

First, our CMO has a Contingency Contract Administration Support mission comprised of civilian and military personnel deployed to six locations in our DCMA Afghanistan tertiary command, two locations in

our DCMA Kuwait tertiary command and at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti. We also have personnel deployed to Kuwait to support the Agency's Reception, Staging, Onward movement and Integration [RSOI] process for both our CMO and DCMA Iraq. All of these deployed personnel primarily support the Army's Logistics Civil Augmentation Program [LOGCAP]. Additionally, we have an administrative contracting officer deployed to Al Udiid Air Base in Qatar in support of the Air Force Contract Augmentation Program.

Second, we have a growing operations and maintenance [O&M] contract workload across the Middle East region. These contracts are administered by our permanent party CMO personnel. An example of this workload would be our support of the Army's Stryker (infantry fighting vehicle) battle-damaged repair facility in Qatar, which is designed to repair and

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quickly return four battle-damaged Strykers back into the fight per month. Another example would be our work on the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle [HMMWV] refurbishment program in Kuwait. This is also a critical contract to the warrior, designed to return 150 battle-damaged, battle-worn or upgraded HMMWVs back into the fight each month. We even have nine such O&M efforts being performed in Iraq, which we support in part via the six-month deployment of two quality assurance personnel, with DCMA Iraq providing the necessary administrative support of those personnel.

Third, we have a very important, ongoing Foreign Military Sales [FMS] mission across the Middle East, administered by the permanent party personnel in our Kuwait command and DCMA Saudi Arabia and DCMA Egypt tertiary commands. We also have individual FMS contracts in several other countries in the region, such as Pakistan and Bahrain, which we support itinerantly. Examples of our FMS responsibilities would include F-15C/D aircraft program depot maintenance work in Saudi Arabia, Low Altitude Surveillance System program work in Kuwait, M1A1 tank program work in Egypt and work on the P-3C aircraft recovery program in Pakistan.

C: How does DCMA Middle East define good customer service, and in what ways is the CMO providing it?

CS: As with all other CMOs in the Agency, DCMA Middle East defines good customer support as consistent with the principles of performance-based management (PBM). By that I mean we work very hard to ensure



we remain keenly aware of our customers’ desired outcomes, and then we seek to ensure the actions of our personnel are fully aligned toward helping achieve those outcomes.

Are we providing good customer support? Without a doubt we are based on the numerous unsolicited compliments we receive from our customers on an ongoing basis. But, of course, like all other CMOs, we are making the journey beyond just relying on that anecdotal customer feedback to developing and posting meaningful metrics in Metrics Manager that will enable us to demonstrate how we know that we are providing customer support that truly is having a positive impact on the issues keeping our customers awake at night. We are making very good progress in establishing these metrics and flowing them into bi-laterally signed, PBM-based Customer Relations Plans for all our prime and support contracts. We are also on track to develop meaningful Individual Performance Plans for both permanent party and deployed personnel.

C: Does the execution of PBM differ in theater as compared to Stateside?

CS: Certainly the overarching principles of PBM and the tools we use to execute it do not differ here in theater. At times, the urgency of a

(Above) Mr. Don Watt, quality assurance representative, DCMA Boeing St. Louis, inspects the quality of work of KBR’s Djiboutian workforce in the laying of the foundation of a construction project on Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

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warrior requirement will require us to expedite those PBM processes, but I think we are well on the way to having embraced the important concept that PBM is not an additional program that we need to execute but rather is simply the way we do business, the way we think, the way we tackle problems and seize opportunities. In this regard, we benefit directly from the excellent work being done at other CMOs across the Agency. When personnel deploy to our area of operations already having embraced PBM, familiar with both its principles and its tools, they hit the ground running even faster during their deployments.

“In theater PBM” does differ from PBM in other parts of the Agency in one important aspect. While, for instance, in the case of the LOGCAP contract, we still very much solicit and seek to align our efforts to desired customer outcomes of the LOGCAP program manager (as flowed down to us via a support delegation from DCMA Phoenix), we also focus heavily on continually aligning our efforts to satisfy the desired customer outcomes of the “boots on the ground” senior leadership in theater. In support of this concept, we are in the process of developing both strategic, theater-wide outcomes for that senior leadership as well as continuing to ensure our deployed personnel remain aware of, and seek to positively influence, unique desired customer outcomes of the senior leadership at the local camps and bases where they are deployed. An example of a “strategic, theater-wide outcome” of in theater senior leadership would be the Afghan First initiative of [Army] Lt. Gen. [Karl] Eikenberry [commander, Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan]. In support of that initiative, our deployed personnel in Afghanistan are currently

executing focused strategies to encourage the employment of greater numbers of Afghan Local Nationals as part of the LOGCAP contract. In fact, we have an Afghan First metric being tracked in Metrics Manager.



C: What is DCMA Middle East’s relationship with the Joint Contracting Command – Iraq/Afghanistan [JCC-I/A]?

CS: JCC-I/A is the lead organization for contracting efforts in the entire area of operations. They interact with our CMO primarily in our jointly aligned efforts to ensure the warrior gets timely delivery of the quality goods and services they need. JCC-I/A also provides us with very useful policy and guidance on key in theater issues and initiatives thus helping us to contribute to a unified contracting effort across the theater.

An interesting, informal example of our efforts to align ourselves with JCC-I/A occurred in mid-August as [Air Force] Maj. Gen. [Darryl A.] Scott [commander, JCC-I/A] transited through Kuwait. While here, he described to us his ongoing initiative to focus his personnel even more keenly on achieving the effects the warrior wants. Maj. Gen. Scott noted that “effects” can

(Above) From left: Ms. Melanie Peterson, property administrator, DCMA Southern Europe; Ms. Rose Aguirre, administrative contracting officer, DCMA San Antonio; and Army Maj. Sidney Gouridine, contract administrator, DCMA Northrop Grumman Baltimore in a teleconference with DCMA Iraq at the DCMA Kuwait office at Camp Arijfan, Kuwait, to discuss a proposed KBR cost avoidance measure with a KBR official.

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largely be thought of as performance-based outcomes. I think the concept of a desired customer effect might indeed be a useful concept for us to also use to enable some to better visualize outcomes.

C: Like at DCMA Iraq, the working conditions for your deployed employees can be difficult (e.g., physical danger from incoming fire, long hours, periodic loss of electricity, extreme temperatures). To what extent do these and other such formidable working conditions hinder your work?

CS: I have been in theater here for nearly a year and a half now, and I am consistently impressed with the absolute professionalism and selflessness of the civilian and military personnel who deploy in support of DCMA's in theater mission.

You are correct about the working conditions. For instance, Kandahar Airfield and Forward Operating Base Salerno, two locations in Afghanistan where our personnel are deployed, do indeed take incoming mortar and rocket fire at times. Another example would be the streets of Kabul, Afghanistan, which our personnel are sometimes restricted from traveling on when performing their quality assurance duties due to threats from improvised explosive devices. And, a deployed lifestyle at all locations in theater certainly entails some sacrifices from the quality of life our deployers enjoy in the States (e.g., dining facility food, small sleeping quarters, often very long hours, extreme heat conditions, etc.)

But I think the significant point to make here is that our civilian and military professionals know about these sacrifices before deploying, and yet they come in theater without hesitation. They hit the ground running. They selflessly dive into their work here with what can best be described as passion. If you read their after action reports, almost everyone mentions how rewarding their deployment experience was. This is for good reason. What DCMA brings to the fight is very apparent on a daily basis to both our deployers and the warriors they support. Our deployers are indeed part of something very immediate and important over here, and they know it. Thus, in answer to the second part of your question, our DCMA professionals don't let the working conditions here in theater slow them down. They get the mission done, every time.

I want to make one more point here, though. Our permanent party personnel (in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Egypt) also often face tough working conditions (force protection threats, extreme desert heat, difficult travel, adapting to working and living in different cultures, etc.). However, just like our deployed personnel, they also consistently dive right in to skillfully tackle the toughest challenges in working our O&M and FMS

(Right) Soldiers of 1st Armored Division's Company A, Task Force 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment in their M1A1 Abrams tank patrol a street in Baghdad, Iraq. DCMA Middle East works extensively with Foreign Military Sales missions across the Middle East, and their work includes M1A1 tank program work in Egypt. (DoD photo)



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contracts. I can't tell you how proud I am of both our deployed and permanent party professionals and to be part of the mission over here.

C: Any final comments for us?

CS: I'd like to note two things. First, there are some awesome job opportunities and work experiences to be had here in the Middle East, and we are always recruiting for permanent party and deployed personnel who want to be a part of our segment of the Agency's mission. Second, wherever someone

chooses to work within DCMA, they should know their work has a very direct and obvious impact here in theater — not only to the success of our CMO as we reach back for the deep expertise the entire DCMA enterprise can and does bring to the issues we face here but, more importantly, to the [military personnel] we see every day. Someone, somewhere in DCMA, enables those warriors to carry or have access to virtually every piece of equipment they use. DCMA plays a huge role in making them extremely effective and bringing them home safely.



(Above) A General Dynamics mechanic drives a Stryker combat vehicle on its final test drive after extensive repairs at the Army's first repair facility for the Stryker in Qatar. DCMA Middle East's contract workload includes support of the Army's Stryker battle-damaged repair facility in Qatar. The facility is designed to repair and quickly return four battle-damaged Strykers back into the fight per month. (Army photo by Mr. Charles Sprauge)